



*Outside the
Door of
the Lodge*

G o r d o n C h a r l t o n

You are standing outside the door of the Lodge. You are soon to play the central character in a story told in ceremonial form.

A story you have never heard.

A character you do not know.

You are not alone.

The Tyler is helping you to prepare. He is a part of the ceremony.

The Tyler, also called the Outer Guard, stands outside the door of the Lodge. He wears a Masonic apron, and a collar which denotes the role he plays.

It has taken a while to reach the door of the Lodge.

First you plucked up the courage to ask a Freemason about joining a Lodge. Perhaps you were not too sure about asking. You may have heard a lot of conflicting information about Freemasonry.

When you first asked, he may have been cautious in his reply.

Perhaps now, outside the door of the Lodge, you understand why. Inside, other Freemasons have gathered with the express purpose of performing this ceremony for your benefit. They want you to enjoy it.

Freemasonry is not for everyone.

For those whom it suits, it is a very special thing.
The Brethren think it will be so for you.

You have talked about the Craft, as Freemasonry is sometimes called, with your proposer.

He has asked about your faith. Do you believe in a Supreme Being? Yes, I am of such-and-such a faith.

Which faith you are of is not my concern, he may have replied. In the Lodge you pray to your God, and I to mine.

He asked about your means.

Would the expenses you would incur cause hardship to yourself, or your family?

He asked about your family and your job.

Does your partner support you in this? Your family is more important than Freemasonry.

Can you have time off from work to attend meetings? Your job is more important than Freemasonry.

He asked about why you want to become a Freemason. There are many aspects to Freemasonry, and people join for many different reasons.

He was concerned that you may want to join for a wrong reason. That you thought it would improve your prospects for promotion, for instance. You would be very disappointed to find out that you were mistaken after paying the joining fees.

You probably asked about the ceremony, or wanted to ask, but refrained, thinking it to be secret.

Detailed descriptions of the Masonic ceremonies have been published many times, with various degrees of accuracy, and of many different variations of the basic ceremonies.

Reading them is like reading the script before you go to see the play.

Now you are glad you did not read them. You feel anticipation as you stand outside the door of the Lodge.

Soon you will be a part of a ceremony.

You know perhaps that it is set in Biblical times, around the building of King Solomon's Temple, and that the Masons will give you their word.

The Masonic word is not given lightly, but with due ceremony. Such as the ceremony you are about to participate in.

The members of the Lodge are entrusting you with a word, and ask in return that you undertake to maintain that trust.

Every Freemason in the world shares this trust, has stood outside the door of the Lodge as you do.

You are not alone.

You have met several members of the Lodge.

You have met, or know, your seconder. Perhaps you have attended social functions. Most certainly you have met with the Lodge committee.

With the best will in the world a panel interview can be a daunting experience, Masonic ones are not too bad.

They were there to make a recommendation to the Lodge, who then voted on your joining.

They asked the same sorts of questions as your proposer and seconder.

Perhaps they said a few things about Freemasonry.

About what it does, and what it is not.

It does require a belief in a Supreme Being, but it is not a religion.

Your religion is more important than Freemasonry.

It does prohibit political discussion in the meetings,
and it is not a political organisation.

Your civic, moral and legal responsibilities are more
important than Freemasonry.

It does collect money for charity, but it is not primarily a charitable organisation.

It does promote moral and civil behaviour amongst its members, but it is not a crusading body.

You are not just joining this Lodge, you are joining
Freemasonry.

Freemasonry is international.

Perhaps you feel a little apprehensive. The Tyler is there to talk to you, to answer your questions.

The committee were there to answer your questions.

Your proposer and seconder were there to answer your questions.

But there is only one way to know for sure.

Which is why you are here.

Outside the door of the Lodge.

About to knock...

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